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Library Networking and Consortia Digital Resource Sharing

T. Bala Theresa

HOD, Department of Library & Information Science, St. Ann's College for Women, Hyderabad, India

Ch. Ratna kumari

Lecturer, Department of Library & Information Science, St. Ann's College for Women, Hyderabad, India

Abstract:

Resource sharing is a concept which includes many cooperative activities between libraries and other information centers. Advent of IT (Information Technology) and ICT's (Information Communication Technology) have opened up new opportunities for greater cooperation. ICT is transforming world society into an important force to reckon with and the activities are taking a center stage in all spheres of human endeavors, inclusive of libraries. Digital interactions, collaborative approaches to digital repositories, providing Content Consortiums and other practical experiences for sharing resources are promising Development in the recent years.

Document resources sharing is the basis of modem document services, and also the working target of the document workers and the key point is the development of digital resources. The purpose of digital resources development is to use and share library information resources effectively.

Keywords: IT, ICT, Consortitium, INFLIBNET

1. Introduction

Libraries are heart of the organizations due to their information resources, and librarians are knowledge administrators who know the importance of information, knowledge transfer and resource sharing.

Electronic information resource sharing is critical for effective functioning of libraries. Increased availability of information in digital format and high costs of journal subscription compels the libraries to work together. Technical advancements provides platform for digital resource sharing and offer many opportunities for librarians to become more technical and professional

Today, organizations should empower their libraries not only for themselves but also for promoting inter-library services, for transferring of knowledge. In addition digital libraries are appropriate options in preparing a knowledge-based society and for distribution of information through communities with transmission of knowledge in the digital environment (with utilizing IT and ICT infrastructure).

Today libraries have to face change management, and they are seeking tools to cope with it, developing strategic alliances with other libraries. Cooperation seems to be the key for libraries to survive. Cooperation efforts vary, depending on geographic areas and on different cultural traditions, but they seem to be resent throughout the world, on one side, nations with libraries used to strong practice in cooperation and sharing have seen a flourishing of new cooperative initiatives and formal consortia, on the other side, nations where this collaborative practice was not within its culture have received a boost towards it. Cooperation between academic libraries has always been on the basis of library activities.

Knowledge work requires not just people but also tools and resources. Information and communication technologies have introduced a wide array of new tools to support knowledge work. IT is useful in most stages of the knowledge sharing process, and it is used for content management. Internet, IT, and ICT developments have facilitated resource sharing activities. Advent of ICT has opened up new opportunities for proper mutual cooperation among libraries. As digital information spheres are developing, librarians must adopt resource sharing policies, practices, and procedures in libraries. Although interlibrary loan (ILL) specialists provide an invaluable service, proper document delivery and resource sharing activities are needed. On the other hand a library consortium is a promising development for resource sharing.

2. Literature Review

Nowrouzi Chkalov (2012) offers that: “The issue of cooperation between library centers is not a new one. The issue of resource sharing was raised in the 70s but past facilities varied with modern ones. Today, in addition to the technical facilities and hardware in this regard, the cultural issue is also important. The first question in sharing the resources is the consent of organizations. Library centers should prefer group interests over their individual ones.”

Posner (2012) believes that: “Librarians are in a good position to understand and mediate among all stakeholders so that individual and societal interests in learning and in creating new knowledge are ultimately served. Instead of merely minimizing risks to their institutions, they should, instead, lead discussions of how to improve the system for everyone. Therefore, it is vital that librarians make all parties, including the public and understand why open, free, convenient resource sharing is crucial to scholarly communication and popular culture, and to protect what is at stake, – the intellectual development of individuals and society .

3. Digital Libraries/ Resources

Electronic *library* is a collection of *digital* objects that can include text, visual material, audio material, video material, stored as electronic media formats, along with means for organizing, storing, and retrieving the files and media contained in the *library* collection.

Digital Library is the concept of information stored digitally and made accessible to users through digital systems and networks. It is a fully automated information system with all resources in digital form. Digital library provides chanced search and browse features.

The main objective of digital libraries

- To collect store, organize and retrieve digital information
- To minimize massive storage and space problem in libraries
- To contribute to the lifelong learning opportunities to all people.
- To satisfy the users requirements

The objectives of the digital libraries are:

- To educate users of new technologies that exist including internet
- To educate user on rules and regulations governing the use of facilities
- To enlighten the potential users about the availability of information

The benefits of digital libraries

- Easier to access to individual components
- Rapid access to materials held remotely
- Potential for integration into teaching materials.
- Virtual reunification allowing dispersed collections brought together.

Many e-resources are available on the internet/ web as well as in the print media. Some examples are electronic databases, electronic books, electronic journals etc. availability of e-resources on the web are search engines, gateways, online databases e-journals, electronic forums, OPAC, etc.

4. Resource Sharing: CONSOTIUM

The rapid growth of electronic resources and the complexities of copyright concerns have made it difficult to obtain library materials freely. So, interlibrary loan (ILL), document delivery (DD) services and resource sharing have become more and more popular .In the age of digital evolution and escalating price of electronic information, resource sharing is critical for effective functioning of libraries. Digital resources and networking have created new opportunities for the organization of services and maintaining virtual/digital libraries. The goals of resource sharing include:

- facilitating users to have better access to library holdings or services;
- Positive effect on library budget;
- enhancing of library resources and information to benefit users;
- enabling the users to be more aware regarding the resources not available in their own library;
- advocate and support creative use of library/information resources; and,
- Develop shared policies for inter library loan (ILL), special collections and non circulating materials.

Librarians are in a good position to understand and mediate among all stakeholders so that individual and societal interests in learning and in creating new knowledge are ultimately served. Instead of merely minimizing risks to their institutions, they should, instead, lead discussions of how to improve the system for everyone. Therefore, it is vital that librarians make all parties including the public, understand why open, free, convenient resource sharing is crucial to scholarly communication and popular culture, and to protect what is at stake, the intellectual development of individuals and society – when it is threatened.

Resource sharing barriers, Seal (1998) pointed out that: “In spite of the benefits of international resource sharing, the actual act of collaboration is sometimes easier said than done because of a number of barriers. These include (1) the simple problems of distance and multiple time zones which can hinder communication; these have been overcome to a great extent through fax and electronic mail; (2) inadequate human resources to carry out international projects; educating staff and re-ordering priorities are required; (3) insufficient funding, a major difficulty that can sometimes be resolved with foundation and/or government support; (4) inadequate technology, incompatible computer systems, or poor telecommunications infrastructure; additional funding and planning are needed to

mitigate these potentially serious difficulties; (5) a lack of international standards for bibliographic description, record format, and exchange of data are all limiting factors; only concerted efforts by influential international organizations such as IFLA can someday resolve these obstacles.

The library along with delivering information services to researchers, and library patrons, try in updating and delivering digital services to national and global end-users, too. Expert librarians, technical engineers and computer operators, are working together in order to prepare digital services for interested public and specialists.

Resource sharing has been one of the fundamental principles for supporting library services, but the object of the sharing has changed over the years. Cooperative academic library activities require the support of formal consortia, passing from a model of organizational self-sufficiency to a collaborative survival mode.

- To exploit resources by sharing existing collections or resources through virtual union catalogues
- To reduce the costs of member library operations by achieving better group purchase prices for information products
- To condition commercial publishers, with the aim to reduce the rate of rise in the cost of information

Resource developers had concerted ideas about the limited value of explicating or differentiating collections for users of digital resources. The most important thing to a library is to make it smooth in the processes of acquisition and circulation (lending and returning) of books. To the digital library of traditional sense that is to integrate and share electronic resources in the network. The digital resource sharing platform under the background of new urban agglomeration integrated resource of digital libraries therefore; the new platform should not only meet the needs of including all the functions of traditional digital library, but also focus on sharing the local characteristics.

Resource sharing entails apportioning, allocating, distributing or contributing something on a voluntary basis for mutual benefits. Library Consortium is any local statewide, regional or interstate co-operative association of libraries that provides for the systematic and effective co-ordination of the resources. Consortium is a generic term to indicate a group of libraries that are working together for a common goal.

4.1. Purpose of consortium is

- Controlling building cost by providing regional storage facilities, to meet the needs of the people.
- To collect all the documents published at the national and international level.
- To overcome the language barrier. The need of consortium to collect all the documents published at the national and international level.
- To eliminate the different types of problems.

4.2. Benefits of consortium

- It combines the resources available in the library.
- Provides better faster and cheaper services at least cost.

4.3. Main objective

- To facilitate access to information through shared computer system and networks.
- Increase the universe of publication.
- E-content licensing, document delivery collection sharing etc are the main functions of consortium.

Library consortia have come up in many countries of the world. In India too several consortia have been developed such as Forum for Resource Sharing in Astronomy and Astrophysics (FORSA), Indian National Digital Library in Science & Technology (INDEST), INFONET project of UGC, Health Sciences Library & Information Network.

(HELINET), CSIR E-Journals Consortium, Department of Atomic Energy Libraries Consortium and Indian Institutes of Management Library Consortium. Besides, efforts are on to develop consortia by ICAR, ICMR, ICSSR and other government agencies. However, if we look into their function, it is clear that most of them have been set up with the aim of procuring e-journals at competitive prices and sometimes sharing the e-journal resources. No consortium aims at sharing other resources, especially print resources, which still form the major part of Indian libraries. Thus their functioning is limited for e-resources.

4.4. For Ex.

The Project entitled "National Library and Information Services Infrastructure for Scholarly Content (N-LIST)", being jointly executed by the UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium, INFLIBNET Centre and the INDEST-AICTE Consortium. The N-LIST project provides access to e-resources to students, researchers and faculty from colleges and other beneficiary institutions through server(s) installed at the INFLIBNET Centre. The authorized users from colleges can now access e-resources and download articles required by them directly from the publisher's website once they are duly authenticated as authorized users through servers deployed at the INFLIBNET Centre

UGC (University Grants Commission), INFLIBNET (Information Library Network) N-List, our College, St. Ann's College for Women, Mehdiapatnam, Hyderabad, authorized user from colleges registered under NLIST program, we have access for the **e-resources** (6000+ journals and 97000+ eBooks for payment of Rs. 5,000/). This membership facility for academic institutions with nominal annual membership fee is the initiative of Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) Under the NME-ICT now

funded by UGC, as college component under UGC INFONET Digital Library Consortium. This initiative is enabling the faculty and students to take up projects in the said fields, and enhancing the quality of research leading to academic excellence.

5. Conclusion

Sharing of information resources in the library is an important indicator of the level of development. The concept of information resource sharing strategy has become an important issue facing libraries. It is important for Librarians to establish a correct concept of literature resource sharing. The establishment of digital information resource sharing has to be strengthened to improve the collection of resources to sustainable development.

Implementation will require some time and many hurdles are to be crossed. It will be possible to have effective nationwide resource sharing. This will ensure maximum saving with regard to money spent on acquisition of information resources throughout the country and will help expedite research at all levels thereby contributing greatly in national development.

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